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# THE NEW POLITICS OF TRANSATLANTIC DEFENSE COOPERATION

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*The Istanbul Summit will demonstrate how NATO confronts new threats in a new way — by projecting stability. The Alliance's commitment to Afghanistan is the top priority. Also on the agenda are strengthened and expanded partnerships, better force generation and planning procedures in the transformation process, and follow-through on current military operations. Territorial defense remains a core function, but providing security requires addressing the potential risks and threats that arise far from our homes. Either these problems are tackled when and where they emerge, or they will end up on our doorstep.*

The NATO Summit will cap a month of intensive, top-level diplomatic activity, including the Group of Eight (G-8) meeting, the U.S.-EU (United States-European Union) Summit and the Normandy commemoration. So the NATO Summit will have distinct goals and accomplishments, but will be part of a wider picture. In today's fluid strategic environment, this is as it must be. NATO will act with its partners and other international organizations to defend against new threats in a new way — by projecting stability.

For the transatlantic community, projecting stability has become the precondition for our security. Territorial defense remains a core function, but we simply can no longer protect our security without addressing the potential risks and threats that arise far from our homes. Either we tackle these problems when and where they emerge, or they will end up on our doorstep.

The Istanbul Summit will demonstrate how the new NATO projects stability:

- By strengthening our relationships with an ever-growing list of partners, from the Balkans to the Caucasus, from Central Asia to the Mediterranean countries and the wider region;
- Through military operations in the Balkans, in Afghanistan, and through Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean Sea;

- And by modernizing the way we organize and deploy our forces for the new operations, far away from home.

My first priority for Istanbul — NATO's priority — is Afghanistan. The importance of Afghanistan to our security is clear. Afghanistan may be halfway around the world, but its success matters to our security.

That is why NATO's governments have committed to Afghanistan. Since NATO took command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) last August, things have turned for the better. Thanks to ISAF's patrols, Kabul is safer than it has ever been. We are helping to secure heavy weapons in the capital. We have now started to expand our presence beyond Kabul. We are helping to retrain Afghan fighters, to help them reintegrate into civilian life. In short, NATO's presence is making a tangible difference.

But we need to do more. I intend to be able to announce, at our summit, and alongside 26 heads of state and government, that we will further expand our presence in Afghanistan by increasing the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams. I want NATO to play a strong role in supporting the elections that the United Nations is organizing for later this year.

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I want NATO to be able to say to President Karzai, and the Afghan people, that the Alliance is helping them toward a better future. A future of peace and security. A future of increasing prosperity. And a future where their country is contributing to international security, rather than threatening it. And I am confident that this is achievable. Operations like Afghanistan and Active Endeavour are important, and the ability to conduct such robust military operations makes the Alliance unique. But operations are only one tool available to NATO. We are also a forum for political consultations, especially regarding security issues.

So let me be clear: projecting stability means, first and foremost, building partnerships to maximize our collective ability to defend the peace. That's what our Partnership for Peace and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council have always been about. And they are certainly delivering. Our partners are with us in Bosnia. They are with us in Kosovo. And they are making a very important contribution, indeed, in meeting NATO's priority number one: Afghanistan.

At Istanbul, we will enhance our partnerships to deliver more. We will concentrate more on defense reform to help some of our partners continue with their democratic transitions. We will also focus on increasing our cooperation with the Caucasus and Central Asia — areas that once seemed very far away, but that we now know are essential to our security right here.

One crucial partner is Russia. The NATO-Russia relationship alone is a vital bridge of security across Europe. Both NATO and Russia are safer now that we are partners. We are working on a range of projects, including terrorism, proliferation, civil emergency planning, and military-to-military cooperation. I visited Moscow recently, and I told President Putin that I hope the conditions will be right for him to come to Istanbul.

Ukraine is another vital partner. Its geographic position alone makes its success a key strategic goal. We are, and will remain, closely engaged with this nation, helping it build its democracy and helping

build our mutual security. We want to help Ukraine to integrate further into our Euro-Atlantic Community.

NATO is also working hard on building stronger relationships with the Mediterranean countries, and is reaching out to those in the wider region.

No one today can doubt that these regions matter. Demographics, economics, and transnational threats create an ever-closer interdependence between us.

Recently, my deputy went to countries in the region in order to explore the best way forward. We want to hear what these countries have to say, what they want in terms of dialogue and cooperation. Above all, we want to engage the countries in the region and to make sure that there is "joint ownership" of any new cooperative efforts to enhance our common security.

This is an ambitious undertaking. While the strategic necessity of our engagement is not in doubt, some may say that with things as they are in the Middle East, it is not the right time. Others argue, more persuasively, that we have no time to lose. The Group of Eight and the European Union are also considering new initiatives, and we will need to complement each other's efforts. The time has come to build new bridges to this pivotal region.

Let me add a word about Iraq. Our summit will take place just 48 hours before Iraq becomes, once again, a sovereign nation. Iraq will be in the news, and it will certainly remain on our agenda. But, as we all know, developments there are fast-paced. I cannot speculate now on what the situation will look like at the end of June. That depends on a range of variables, including necessary U.N. Security Council action, events on the ground, and last, but not least, the nature and views of the new government. Many allies have forces committed in Iraq, and NATO will continue to support the multinational division and follow events closely. Beyond that, I cannot rule out, or predict, possible decisions by the Alliance.

Istanbul will certainly also highlight the strategic value of a strong partnership between NATO and the

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EU. Clearly, as NATO continues to transform, and the EU is finding its own distinct role as a security actor, our relationship will continue to evolve as well. We welcome a European Security and Defense Policy as a means to enhance Europe's contribution to our common security.

At Istanbul, we expect to announce that NATO's mission in Bosnia — Stabilization Force (SFOR) — can be successfully concluded at the end of the year. The EU has already stated that it would be ready to deploy a mission into Bosnia, in full cooperation with the Alliance, and with NATO's continuing support.

This will be a major step forward in a NATO-EU relationship that is increasingly guided by pragmatism, close consultation, and transparency. And it will help to advance NATO-EU cooperation in other critical areas, notably in combating terrorism and preventing proliferation.

The likely assumption by the EU of additional security responsibilities in Bosnia, plus NATO's growing engagement in Afghanistan, has led some to believe that NATO might depart from the scene in the Balkans. We will not. We will retain a NATO presence in Bosnia even after the handover to the EU. We will continue to help the country in its defense reforms — because our goal remains to welcome Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Serbia and Montenegro, into our Partnership for Peace program in due course.

Our commitment to Kosovo also remains unflinching. Kosovo remains an enormous challenge. But the recent outbreaks of violence have only strengthened our resolve to see this through. When violence flared up in mid-March, we were able to quickly reinforce our presence and put out the flames. And we are now far more deeply engaged in the political process than ever before. There simply is no trade-off between

our missions in the Balkans and Afghanistan. We can do both. Indeed, we are doing both.

Finally, Istanbul will also demonstrate that NATO's military transformation is delivering results. The NATO Response Force is up and running. We will have completed various initiatives from our Prague Summit, including enhanced airlift and sealift capabilities and a package of counter-terrorism and missile defense measures. And we will mark the full operational capability of our new Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defense Battalion.

But transformation means more than new military hardware. It also means deployability and usability. I intend to ensure that when nations agree to a mission, we also have the forces we need to carry it out. Our credibility depends on delivering on our promises. And better force generation and force planning procedures are critical in this regard.

Our Istanbul Summit will bring home that NATO is tackling the new challenges of the 21st century. It will bring home that the new NATO, the NATO of 26 members, is an Alliance that acts. It acts in the Balkans and Afghanistan, where our troops make the difference between war and peace. It acts in the Mediterranean, where our ships engage in anti-terrorist operations. It acts together with partners — old and perhaps new partners. And it cooperates ever more closely with other international institutions.

That is the new NATO we will showcase in Istanbul: an Alliance in which Europe and North America are consulting every day on the key security issues before them — acting together, in the field, to defend our shared security, and reaching out to build security where it is needed. ●